

Appendix L

Circuit-Based Meetings: Slide Presentation

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2003 – 2004 District Court Case Weighting Study

**Overview Presented to
District Judge Participants in the
DC Circuit's Case Weights
Consensus Meeting**

November 21, 2003

What Are Case Weights?

- Case weights represent the **relative** amount of attention cases of different types require from district judges.
- They are a better estimate of caseload burden than a count of raw cases.

	Court 1	Court 2	Court 3
Contract Cases	20	50	20
Student Loan Cases	70	45	10
Patent Cases	10	5	70
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Total Cases	100	100	100

Case Weights Estimate Average Burden

- The time a judge spends on **any particular** case can vary greatly – from no time at all to many months – depending on the specific characteristics of that case.
- But, **on average**, cases of different types demand different levels of attention.
- If we had to predict the district judge time that will be required to fully process 100 cases of a particular type filed today, the best estimate is 100 times the **average time** it took to process a case of that type in the past.

Why Does Average Burden Differ?

- There are substantive and legal reasons why some types of cases are more demanding of judge time than others.
- But, ultimately some types of cases take more time because:
 - the judge has to do more things (e.g., hold more conferences, issue more rulings, write more opinions)
 - the things that need to be done take more time (e.g., it takes longer to read the briefs and do research for a motion on a novel patent issue than on a routine contracts issue)

Features of the New Case Weighting Method

- The new study uses an **event-based** approach
Case weight =
 $(\text{what judges do}) * (\text{the time it takes to do it})$
- Does not require judges to keep daily time records
- Takes advantage of objective case processing information already routinely collected by the courts
- Uses time estimates of experienced judges for chambers and non-trial events
- Depends on general categories of **docketed** events to represent the work judges do in a case
- Can be updated on a more regular basis

Calculating Time for Each Event Category

Example: Conferences

Average number of
events in each case

1.8

multiplied by

Average amount of
time for each event

30 minutes

Case #	# Conferences
1	2
2	0
3	1
.	.
.	.
.	.
98	0
99	1
100	3
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100 cases	180 conferences

Time associated with conferences

added to the overall case weight

$1.8 \times 30 = 54$ minutes

Example: Civil Case Weight Computed from Event Weights and Event Frequencies

		(A) Trials and Other Evidentiary Proceedings						(B) Nontrial Proceedings					
		Jury Trials		Non-Jury Trials		Other Evidentiary Proceedings		Conferences		Hearings		Other Non-Evidentiary Proceedings	
Case Type	Computed Case Weight (in Hours)	Event Weight	Event Freq	Event Weight	Event Freq	Event Weight	Event Freq	Event Weight	Event Freq	Event Weight	Event Freq	Event Weight	Event Freq
Example	15.01	21.20	0.03	11.90	0.07	3.50	0.13	0.48	1.63	0.61	2.51	0.42	1.07

(C) Non-Proceeding Case-Related Activity							
Order on Motion for Summary Judgment		Order on Discovery Motion		Order on Any Other Enumerated Motion		Trial and Hearing Prep	
Event Weight	Event Freq	Event Weight	Event Freq	Event Weight	Event Freq	Event Weight	Event Freq
1.2	0.89	0.58	4.12	0.83	6.71	0.5	2.6